



GODALMING TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Godalming Town Football Club is committed to providing a friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can participate and watch football in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all supporters, club members or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell any committee member and the club welfare officer(s).

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional** - Being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically) sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding football boots/shin guards, threatening gestures).
- **Physical** - Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- **Racist** - Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- **Sexual** - Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic** - Because of or focussing on the issue of sexuality.
- **Verbal**.- Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.

Why is it important to respond to and report bullying?

No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Bullying hurts the individual(s) involved. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Individuals who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

This club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

- All club members, coaches, officials and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All, club members, officials and coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All players and parents should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a club we take bullying seriously. Players and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.

Any form of bullying at our football club WILL NOT be tolerated.



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Signs and Indicators

A child or adult may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Says he or she is being bullied
- Is unwilling to go to club sessions.
- They become withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence.
- Feels ill before training sessions.
- Comes home with clothes torn or training equipment damaged or stolen.
- Has possessions go "missing"
- He or she asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully).
- They have unexplained cuts or bruises.
- is frightened to say what's wrong.
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above

In more extreme cases:

- Starts stammering
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares.
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- Is bullying other children or siblings.
- Stops eating.
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.

These signs and behaviours may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

What needs to be done?

- Report bullying incidents to the club welfare officer or a member of the clubs committee or contact the Surrey FA county welfare officer.
- In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the Surrey FA county welfare officer for advice and possibly to the FA Case Management System.
- Parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.

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- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
- If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action.

If the club decides that it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation then we will follow the procedure outlined below:

- Try and bring both parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
- If this fails, a small panel (made up from chairman, Club Welfare Officer, Secretary, committee members if necessary) will meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes will be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.
- The same 3 persons should meet with the alleged bully and parent/s and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes shall again be taken and agreed.

If bullying has in their view taken place the individual should be warned and put on notice of further action. This could be one or more of the following:

1. To issue a one match ban of the player.
2. To place the player on a one month good behaviour probationary period.
3. Reviewed at the following monthly meeting.
4. To exclude the person(s) from the club.

In some cases the parent of the bully or bullied player can be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The club committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.

All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

In the case of adults reported to be bullying anyone within the club that is under 18 years of age, the Club Welfare Officer should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken.

It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a team manager, official or coach, The FAs child protection and best practice awareness training is recommended.

More serious cases may be referred to the police, social services or judicial complaints.

Godalming Town Club Welfare Officer:

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